



**Application form:  
Community Planning Program and  
Local Technical Assistance Program**

**DEADLINE: Noon on Thursday, June 25, 2015**

This application form is online at [www.rtachicago.com/applications](http://www.rtachicago.com/applications). You may submit the form by email to [applications@rtachicago.com](mailto:applications@rtachicago.com).

Upon receipt of application, you will receive an e-mail verifying that your application has been received.

**1. Name of Applicant: Metropolitan Planning Council (MPC)**

**2. Main Contact for Application:**

Name: Josh Ellis

Title: Director

Phone number: 312.863.6045

Email: [jellis@metroplanning.org](mailto:jellis@metroplanning.org)

**3. Type of Applicant (please check any that apply):**

☐ Local government

☐ Multijurisdictional group\* ☐ Please list the members of the group (including government and nongovernmental organizations):

☒ Nongovernmental organization\* ☐ Name of local government partner(s):  
City of Chicago, Mayor's Office (see attached letter of support)

\*Applications submitted by multijurisdictional groups and nongovernmental organizations must include a letter indicating support from each relevant local government. See the FAQs for more information. Nongovernmental applicants are strongly encouraged to contact CMAP, RTA, or CCDPH prior to submitting their application to discuss their project and the demonstration of local support.

#### 4. Project Type (please check any that apply):

Please check all statements below that describe characteristics of your project. (This will help us determine whether your project is best handled by CMAP, RTA, or CCDPH.)

- ☒ My project involves preparation of a plan.
- ☒ My project helps to implement a past plan.
- ☒ My project links land use, transportation, and housing.
- ☒ My project has direct relevance to public transit and supports the use of the existing transit system.
- ☐ My project is a bicycle, pedestrian, or active transportation plan in suburban Cook County.
- ☐ My project is not directly related to transportation or land use, but implements GO TO 2040 in other ways.

#### 5. Local Match Requirement (please initial to indicate you are aware of the local match requirements):

I am aware that a local match will be required for most projects, and understand that if my project is selected it is up to the project applicant to contribute a local match. (See the program guide for further details on local match requirements.)

- ☒ Yes, I understand that applicants will be required to contribute a local match.

#### 6. Project Location:

Please provide a brief description of the location of your project. You may include a map if that helps to describe location, but this is not required. If your project helps to implement a past plan, please include a link to that plan.

The primary geographic focus of the *Great Rivers Chicago* initiative is the City of Chicago, though the nature of many of the issues of concern (i.e. transportation, habitat, stormwater, etc.) necessarily require that we examine Chicago's riparian neighbors as well. We are examining the Calumet, Chicago and Des Plaines rivers systems, as well as engaging residents from non-riverfront communities to not only inform but encourage their use of future riverfront assets. Thus, all corners of the city are equally important to engage.

#### 7. Project Description:

**Please tell us what you would like to do in your community, and what assistance is needed.** If you have more than one idea, please submit a separate application for each project. Please be specific, but also brief (less than two pages per project idea)—we simply want to have a basic understanding of what you want to do. Program staff will follow-up with you if we need any additional information to fully understand your proposed project.

MPC and the City of Chicago request LTA from CMAP in order to expand capacity for stakeholder engagement on *Great Rivers Chicago*, an initiative that is developing a forward-thinking vision and action agenda for policy, operations and infrastructure changes to maximize the potential of Chicago's rivers and riverfronts as community, economic, recreational and natural assets. While the geographic focus is the river systems within the boundaries of Chicago – Calumet, Chicago and Des Plaines – many of the issues necessitate a regional purview. This project is a partnership between MPC and the City of Chicago, and made possible through funding from the Chicago Community Trust, the Joyce Foundation and ArcelorMittal.

Stakeholder outreach for *Great Rivers Chicago* is being done in two main phases. Phase I is currently underway and will conclude at the end of 2015. Throughout Phase I we will seek to answer what the current perceptions are of these rivers and their riverbanks, as well as the policy, governance,

infrastructure and environmental factors that influence these systems. Phase II – which will take place in the late 2015 through the spring of 2016 – will be to receive input and feedback on the proposed vision and action agenda that MPC and its partners subsequently develop.

MPC requests CMAP support in Phases I and II of *Great Rivers Chicago*. Friends of the Chicago River (Friends) is providing strategic stakeholder engagement support to MPC, targeting individuals, community organizations and topical stakeholder groups which Friends has existing working relationships (i.e. kayakers, birders, etc.). MPC requests that CMAP staff also partner in stakeholder engagement, targeting neighborhoods and organizations that CMAP has developed relationships with through past LTA efforts or other CMAP initiatives.

An MPC review of past and current LTA projects finds that while the Calumet, Chicago and Des Plaines rivers and riverfronts have seldom been the focal point of any given LTA project, there are recommendations in dozens of LTA reports about improving stormwater management, trail connectivity, public transit, habitat, etc. on some stretch of these rivers. This includes plans within the City of Chicago such as the current Chinatown and Pilsen/Little Village efforts, but also suburban (e.g. Blue Island, Niles, Summit, etc.) or regional efforts with the Forest Preserve District of Cook County. Simply put, CMAP has many existing relationships through its LTA that can be readily tapped for meaningful input on *Great Rivers Chicago*. This is particularly true in communities where Chinese or Spanish language predominance would make cursory level public engagement fruitless, or even damaging – CMAP has the relationships and experience working in those languages and communities such that genuine engagement there is possible.

CMAP's engagement on *Great Rivers Chicago* could move many of the past LTA recommendations toward implementation – from improving wayfinding signage to the Des Plaines River trail, to identifying and prioritizing new riverfront park space on the Sanitary and Ship Canal (and identifying specific activities to be planned in those spaces), to improving the integration of industrial and community development on the Calumet. The Mayor's Office of the City of Chicago is eager for actionable recommendations for policy, infrastructure, or operations changes that can maximize the potential of the river systems – further refinement of past LTA recommendations can provide immediate fodder for those.

MPC envisions a close partnership with CMAP and Friends of the Chicago River to tailor stakeholder engagements to specific target individuals or groups. In some instances a small group discussion may be sufficient, in others it may require deployment of online tools or bringing specific groups to the riverfront to document experiences. Flexibility and tailoring will be key. MPC and Friends are already in the process of developing standardized intake forms, reporting and scheduling processes and more – it is envisioned that CMAP staff would rely on those, with the ability to modify and adapt moving forward.

CMAP staff is requested for as much of Phase I of the Great Rivers Chicago outreach as possible, and for the entirety of Phase II, with the initiative expected to conclude in July of 2016.



OFFICE OF MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL  
CITY OF CHICAGO

June 22, 2015

CMAF LTA Staff  
Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning  
233 S. Wacker Drive, #800  
Chicago, Illinois 60606

RE: Letter of Support for Metropolitan Planning Council application for Local  
Technical Assistance to support Great Rivers Chicago

Dear Mr. Dean and Ms. Aleman,

The Metropolitan Planning Council is leading Great Rivers Chicago, in partnership with my team and several City of Chicago departments, in order to develop a long-range vision and action agenda for the future of Chicago's three great rivers – the Chicago, Calumet, and Des Plaines. With well over 100 miles of riverfront in Chicago, our rivers present an amazing opportunity to improve quality-of-life throughout all corners of Chicago, improving our economy, environment and public health at the same time.

MPC's goal is to engage as many local elected officials, community organizations, interest groups, businesses, school children and other stakeholders as possible. Doing so effectively and efficiently requires staff capacity and time, but also relationships built on trust. MPC has many of these in place, but so too does CMAF, given your many past LTA projects (and other efforts) both in Chicago and in some of our neighboring suburban communities that share our rivers and riverbanks. By engaging your staff and relationships, in partnership with MPC (and Friends of the Chicago River), we can greatly extend our collective ability to engage the broadest group of stakeholders possible.

I offer this letter in support of their application, and encourage you to approve it and begin working with us in achieving the full potential of Great Rivers Chicago. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Thank you,

Joe Deal  
Chief Operating Officer  
Office of the Mayor  
City of Chicago